

As students children become better at phoneme segmentation—hearing and saying sounds in words—their phonemic awareness ability grows, and they are ready for more advanced phonemic awareness activities like adding and removing sounds from words. Such phoneme manipulating activities will prepare children to map letters to sounds when they begin reading, and to more quickly analyze and decode word parts.

## Directions

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1. Make a list of words that can be turned into new words by adding a sound (i.e., ox, /f/, fox; ice, /m/, mice; am, /h/, ham; at, /r/, rat; ring, /s/, string; mile, /sm/ smile).
2. Say a word and ask children to add a sound to it to make a new word.
3. Once children have become good at adding sounds to words to make a new word, try the game in reverse and ask them to take a sound away from a word to make a new word.

## Example

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**Teacher** “Let’s say the word “at.”

**Student** “at”

**Teacher** “Let’s add “c” to “at.” What word does it make?”

**Student** “cat”

## Notes

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Like many phonological awareness activities, this is better initially taught in a small group. But once children understand how to do, it can also be done whole class.

Remember to have children say the initial word aloud before they try to turn it into a new word by adding or taking away a sound. That way they are more prepared to “build” the new word from the old one.

When first introducing the game, it may be necessary to model a number of examples before children catch on. Do some examples where you think aloud, and you figure out the new word made by the addition or subtraction of a sound.

This game can eventually be played with letters and letter tiles on boards, mats, dry erase boards, or even laptops where students can drag and drop letters to make new words or delete letters to make new words. In other words, this game can start out as phonological activity early in the year, and become a phonics, word-building activity later in the year.

See the Florida Center for Reading Research Phoneme Manipulating Activities for a number of card-based activities in which students delete and add sounds to words.

## Adapted from

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Kosanovich, Marcia et al. *A Kindergarten Teacher’s Guide to Supporting Family Involvement in Foundational Reading Skills. Educator’s Practice Guide*. NCEE 2020.” What Works Clearinghouse (2020)

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